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Watch Committee conclusion--Sino-Soviet Bloc (as of 20 August):

NO
A. No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends to initiate hostilities against the continental US or its possessions in the immediate future.

B. No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends deliberately to initiate direct military action against US forces abroad, US allies, or areas peripheral to the orbit in the immediate future.

NOTE: The Chinese Communists do not appear to intend major offensive military action in the Taiwan Strait area in the immediate future. They are increasing their capabilities to bring heavy pressure, including interdiction by air, on the offshore islands and could initiate an attack on them with little or no warning. Air clashes in the Taiwan Strait area are likely to recur.

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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Watch Committee conclusion--Middle East (as of 20 August):

Although a deliberate initiation of open hostilities in the Middle East is unlikely in the immediate future, the situation remains highly unstable throughout the area, particularly where US and UK interests or commitments are involved, and incidents and coups could occur at any time.

No

NOTE: The survival of the Jordanian regime continues to be threatened. If the regime in Jordan collapses, action by neighboring countries to take control of Jordanian territory is likely. There are indications of closer accommodation between Saudi Arabia and the UAR.

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OK

Burma: Premier Nu appears to be losing his slim parliamentary majority. Left-wing members of the Communist-influenced National Unity Front, on which he relies, have indicated they will not support the government on certain major policy matters. Nu has cancelled the budgetary session of Parliament, scheduled for 28 August, and he will probably call early general elections.

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DAILY BRIEF

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III. THE WEST

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France: De Gaulle has recently reiterated his belief that the West must come to terms with Arab nationalism and may now feel that France is in a good position diplomatically to take the lead in such an effort, because it did not participate in the Western landings in Lebanon and Jordan. France and Egypt signed an economic, financial, and cultural agreement in Geneva on 13 August, settling claims arising from the Suez affair. [REDACTED]

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LATE ITEM

NO
*Jordan: King Husayn stated on 20 August that unless the United States acceded by 30 August to his request for a mutual defense pact and increased financial assistance he would feel compelled to accept the resignation of the Rifai government. Husayn said there would then be little alternative but for the next government to seek accommodation with the UAR, and that no brakes could be put on any movement in this direction. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Premier Nu Appears To Be Losing His Majority in the
Burmese Parliament

Premier Nu's cancellation on 19 August of the budgetary session of Parliament, recently scheduled for 28 August, indicates that he is no longer confident of a majority. He is reported planning to dissolve Parliament and call for general elections in the hope of gaining for his party a stable and effective majority. Those elections will probably take place in November.

Since the breakup of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) in June, Premier Nu has had to rely for his majority upon 44 votes from the Communist-influenced National United Front. His party, the "clean" AFPFL, has been opposed by the followers of his former deputy premiers, Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein, who call themselves the "stable" AFPFL.

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These factions have publicly denounced Burma's acceptance of American aid and are strongly opposed to the government's terms for insurgent surrenders. Even Nu's sweeping amnesty for insurgent political and criminal acts has failed to satisfy their demands.

Neither part of the AFPFL has made significant parliamentary gains since the party split, and for the past two months all parties have been concentrating on preparations for general elections. Even the defection of the left wing of the National United Front from Nu's government would probably not ensure a majority for Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein. It appears more likely that these dissident votes in Parliament would become a permanent opposition, denying support to any but a pro-Communist government.

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III. THE WEST

France Apparently Aiming for Leading Role in Middle East Settlement

There are indications that France intends to step up its diplomatic efforts to obtain a leading role in working out a modus vivendi between the West and the Arab states. On 13 August France and Egypt initialed an economic, financial, and cultural accord settling outstanding economic questions arising out of the Suez crisis. A move to re-establish diplomatic relations, broken since 1956, may follow.

De Gaulle recently told Italian Premier Fanfani there was no solution to Middle Eastern problems but that a "modus vivendi should and could be worked out." In late July, De Gaulle said that time was running against the West and the West would eventually have to come to terms with Arab nationalism despite Europe's poor bargaining position. French Foreign Ministry officials have long urged rapprochement with the Arab states, and since the advent of De Gaulle the French have carefully de-emphasized their friendship with Israel.

France is motivated by its desire to reassert great-power status, its continued dependence on Middle Eastern oil, and the political and economic necessity of a solution in Algeria. France probably is not sanguine about any lasting solution in the Middle East without some agreement with the Soviet Union, but it probably feels that its present position as a nonparticipant in the landings in Lebanon and Jordan enhances its role as a mediator between the Arab states and the West.

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